

ISRAEL LAND OF ZION

By Reed M. Holmes

A pictorial story of the Bible



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"On a map of the world the land of Israel is but a patch. Yet its influence is felt everywhere. It has been a magnet for many and a target for others. It is a bridge become battleground. It is more. Israel is the heartland of biblical heritage, home alike to all who have followed after Abraham...." The author's preface begins with these words. The book goes on to trace briefly in words and visually with extraordinary photographs the sweep of history and the thrust of a great idea—shalom.

Shalom is more than a greeting. It is a condition of fulfillment in brotherhood. The author's intent is to find within the lively pages of the Bible the essence of shalom. His use of the term "Zion" covers that hope and conveys deeper meaning than common usage would suggest.

To make the land and people of the Bible come alive is the author's motivation. Go in imagination, aided by the crystal clarity of color photography, to the places walked by Moses and Jesus. See, too, the faces of today's children in Israel—Christian, Jew, and Muslim—and hope, with the author, that the words of the Sanskrit shall be heeded: "Walk together, talk together, O ye peoples of the earth. Then, and only then, shall you know peace."

Jacket photograph and all photographs
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Designed by Garry Hood

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LAND OF ZION







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DEDICATION

May thy memory be blessed forever.
Great is thy hope, O Zion.
Hope for thee does not perish, O Zion,
nor is hope for thee forgotten.

— From the Qumran Psalter



PREFACE

On a map of the world the land of Israel is but a patch. Yet its influence is felt everywhere. It has been a magnet for many and a target for others. It is a bridge become battleground. It is more. Israel is the heartland of biblical heritage, home alike to all who have followed after Abraham—in one way or another—in the oldest continuous spiritual movement in the world.

That persistent heritage, with a destiny yet awaiting fulfillment, fills my mind and heart with wonder. The amazement is heightened each time I visit Israel. I want, if I can, by the use of photographs and text, to help people of any race or nation to sense a deeper appreciation of this anguished land of promise. The photographs capture scenes and persons which would not be unfamiliar to the ancients. The text reminds us of the impact of the Scriptures upon the whole world.

A friend in Israel once said to me, "There is only one way to know this land, and that is through your feet." So I walked the streets and ancient pathways and climbed Arbel and Sinai. Living inside the walls of the Old City of Jerusalem lent nearness to diverse people. Experiencing the Galilee from Ginosar to Banias enlivened a sense of history. Pieces of broken pottery underfoot at Magdala and tels of Megiddo and Hazor were ways of feeling the past. Always, everywhere, yesterday and today impinge on each other. Conflict abounds—and breaks the heart.

I know that the story of the children of Israel has been told over and over, but its meaning and its hope are still elusive. Elusive and yet waiting. Obscured and yet hopeful of discovery. Even when the spirit and values of Israel seem subdued and almost lost they still persist, as in the quickening of Jewish celebration in the highly secular state of Israel. A kibbutznik may scoff at religion, all the while sensing daily relationship to the Divine.

This story bears repeating. Because it is continuous we shall not divide it into chapters. In its telling we shall try to uncover the unique debt we owe and the priceless promise held out to us all by *Israel—Land of Zion*.

ISRAEL LAND OF ZION

“May thy memory be blessed forever. Great is thy hope, O Zion.” Memory and hope combine in Israel. The old, old paths are ever new. They may be traced through heritage-laden mountains and valleys back to Abraham, and forward to that Zion which is the perennial hope of every Jew and Christian. Israel is a land of heritage and promise.

Remembrance is more than pale recollections in the mind. It is a life-giving means of entering into our history. By re-creating and participating in the past we discover who we are. By association with those who have shaped and helped us we may discover our ends as well as our beginnings. By vivid memory of the courageous ones we may be inspired to live above the norm, while at the same time gathering insights to avoid the follies of our forebears.

What stories the Holy Land tells to the observant eye!
Whether to Moslem, Christian, or Jew, the stones and shards
yield hints of heritage. Tels and tombs bespeak a woeful unity of
pathos and heartbreak.

Wherever you turn in Israel the stones cry out and voices
speak from the dust. The stories they tell lean into our hearts,
reminding of heritage and of hopes still unfulfilled.

And so we start with Abraham—friend of God and the father
of many.

Not many generations after pottery and molten copper were
brought together to create implements of peace and war, and
after "a just and perfect man" rode out a mighty storm, there
came forth a child from the seed of Noah and Shem and Eber
and Peleg and Nehor and Terah. The child's name was Abraham.
He was born in the land of Shinar, the place of Bab-ilu, "The
gate of God."

And Abraham heard the voice of the Lord, affronted by the presumptions of the people of Babylon, saying, "Go forth—to a land that I will show thee, and I will make of thee a great nation . . . and thou shalt be a blessing."

The dream of Zion was conceived, and, in the womb of history, a people were already in process of becoming.

Bedouin tents
in Israel



“And they went forth . . . into the land of Canaan they came.”

Past Hermon, the mountain whose gift is the Jordan, and through the fertile land of Huleh and Hazor they went, even passing by the inland sea of living water that later generations would call Galilee and Kinneret. Beyond the plain of Armageddon, to be fertilized by a thousand battles, Abraham walked and grazed his flocks to Shechem and Beth-el—and there he raised an altar to the Lord.

**Mount Hermon from Huleh Valley,
north of the Sea of Galilee**



Yet on he went. In time of famine to the land of the flesh. In Egypt he added to Sarai, his wife, a maidservant, Hagar. Isaac was born to Sarai, Ishmael to Hagar. The blood of Abraham was in both, but between these brothers would run misgiving and enmity to a hundred generations—and more.

At Hebron, which came to be known as the sanctuary of "el Khalil," the friend of God, from the Hittite Ephron, Abraham purchased the double cave, Machpelah. There he would be laid to rest with Sarai (Sarah), later to be joined by Isaac, Rebecca, and Jacob whose bones would be brought from Egypt. Rachel, beloved of Jacob, would be entombed at Bethlehem.

Three men of Hebron, seated
in the marketplace near the
Cave of Machpelah





On Moriah, the mount which would know the footfall of David, Solomon, Herod, and Jesus, Abraham knew his most terrible test and gained his most noble insights. His was not the first firstborn to be regarded as the special property of the Divine—nor the first to be offered in bloody sacrifice. But Isaac he loved and it was a question of whether he loved God more. Whether it was a fair test may be beside the point at this late date. What happened is much to the point. In Abraham's gift of his own was the foreshadowing of another father and another son, and in the substitution of a ram was set a valuable lesson that Jehovah neither requires nor condones human sacrifice.

At least three truths we gain from Abraham. Have faith to go forth; trust in the heart's awareness of value; and most of all, make covenant with God. That covenant was to be the distinctive mark of the offspring of Abraham. It was that which set Abraham apart but not aloof from others. It was the heart of that sense of mission by which Abraham, Isaac, and later Jacob felt themselves under obligation to do and to be that something by which "the nations of the earth [would be] blessed." For Rebecca it was sufficient justification to turn aside from Esau, who dallied with the Canaanites, toward Jacob who would sire twelve sons, who would sire the generations known as the Children of Israel.

Mount Moriah, known by
Abraham and Isaac, and later
the site of the temples of
Solomon and Herod



Joseph was firstborn of Rachel for whom Jacob had waited and labored long years. He was preferred above and resented by his older brethren. Being of remarkable prescience, he aggravated them with symbolic dreams which had one thing in common, his dominance over them. At Dothan they revenged themselves upon him by casting him into an empty well and then drove a bargain with traders on their way from Gilead to Egypt, little realizing that they danced to destiny's tune. In Egypt, the dreamer proved himself not only upright but wise and in time of famine saved that country and the family of his father, now seventy strong. Not yet a nation and hardly a people, they were to multiply and toil and yearn together. Saved from starvation, they would discover bondage in the land of Pharaoh.



Four hundred and thirty years of begetting and multiplying in a favorable climate made of seventy nomads a considerable multitude, a matter of grave concern to "a new king over Egypt who did not know Joseph." He "made their lives bitter with hard service, in mortar and brick" and, to limit their reproductive rate, ordered every male Hebrew child to be killed at birth. Like the brothers of Joseph, Pharaoh unwittingly played into the hands of God. One of the babies destined to die was floated into his own daughter's heart. She called the baby's own mother to nurse and rear the child. It is said that the heavens smiled when the boy child was named Moses which, being interpreted, means "son of Pharaoh."

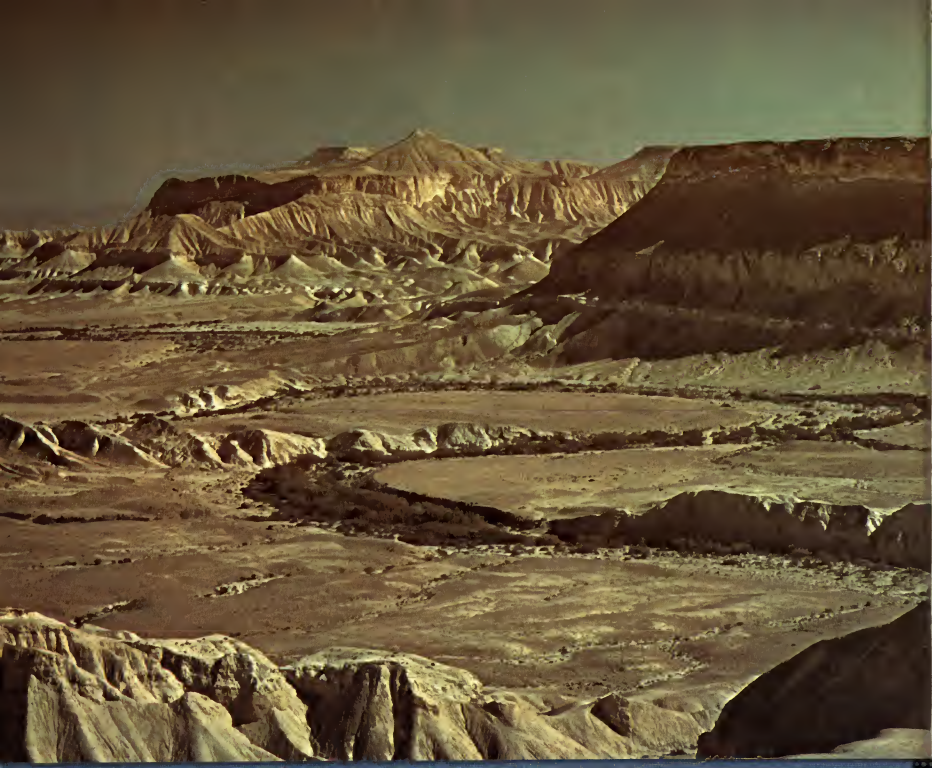
Torn between regal prerogative and his heritage and destiny as one of the sons of Israel, Moses chose the latter. In a moment of rage against a merciless taskmaster's beating of a Hebrew slave, he rose up in wrath and slew the Egyptian.

Moses then fled into the wilderness of the desert of Sinai and found refuge among the people of Midian, especially in the family of Jethro.



In search of pasture for his flocks Moses penetrated the granite range of central Sinai. Its rugged height prolongs the coolness and conserves the pittance of moisture and vegetation. There Moses saw the vision of the burning bush and felt himself commissioned to return to his people in Egypt, to set them free from bondage and to lead them back to the land of the covenant made by Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

That burning yet unburned bush was one of the great turning points in history. The perception of the patriarchs had presaged the moment, but it was Moses on the mountain who heard the voice of God saying, "I Am that I Am." All of history has been affected by the events that ensued from that disclosure—the Exodus, the Sinai revelation of the commandments of God, and the fashioning of a nation in forty years of purposeful wandering in the wilderness.



Assisted by his eloquent brother, Aaron, Moses faced a mountain of greater magnitude than Horeb, or so it seemed when pitted against the intractability of Pharaoh. There was another formidable task—to persuade the children of Israel that the time of deliverance had come. The question was freedom, seen from both sides—the holder and the held—and neither was that anxious for the bonds to be broken. Then oppression was added to oppression. The slaves became convinced. Disaster was added to disaster and the reluctance of Pharaoh gave way.

Readied by Moses for the inevitable journey and running with unleavened bread into freedom, they traversed the narrow spit of land by the Sea of Reeds, and watched the wind-driven waves overwhelm their pursuers. Veering to the right they made their way along the flats to wadis familiar to the feet of Moses—and turned eastward into the years of gestation it takes for a nation to be born.



From the summit
of Sinai at dawn

Desert-parched and hungry, provoked at Moses, and even ridiculed by the mocking laughter of rock walls, these free men looked back longingly to their bonds and would have traded the unremitting disciplines of liberty for the meager but sure meals and even the lash of Egypt. How could they know that they were the benefactors of generations who would look back to that noble struggle under Providence for liberation from totalitarianism and slavery? They were suffering the pangs of freedom and birthing a new hope. The foundations of Zion were being laid—and to many it was no more than misery.

Moses knew misery, too, but it was a different sort. He shared their hunger for food and sanctuary but he also shared the hunger and yearnings of God. He was prophet, seer, and revelator. As such, he went again to the mountain and came down with the words of God.

The laughing rocks of
Wadi Firan



The commandments from Sinai, dramatically and indelibly impressed upon that and ensuing generations, molded a people from a throng. They have accompanied the incomings and outgoings of the Israelites, whether dispersed or gathered, ever since. In affirmations of monotheism and the honoring of parents, and in forbiddings to commit murder, adultery, theft, false witness, and covetousness are the groundwork of that righteousness which alone can secure the nations in community.

Add the tabernacle in which the tablets of stone were kept and we have the rallying point of Israel, later to be expressed in the Temple. Others might, in sophistication and permissiveness, scoff at the great specificity of both law and tabernacle, but these specifics, phylactery-like, have bound the children of Israel together in spite of persecution and scattering.

And so Moses led his people into nationhood and back to the land of the promise. They found it to be a promising land as well from the Sinai to Mt. Hermon, and in the valleys and plains of Sharon and Jordan, Jezreel and Gennesaret. And all the while their God was storing up mineral riches in the Dead Sea for a later Israel.

Granting the leadership to Joshua and giving the people his blessing, Moses gave thanks to the Lord and in one of the loneliest scenes of history turned away from the land he cherished but which another must win.



Salt formations along
the shore near ancient
Sodom

Freedom under God. Revelation from God. Response to God. What more could be asked of one man? His epitaph is simple, and great: "The Lord spoke to Moses...and Moses wrote all the words of the Lord." It could be said more simply still: He lived by the word of the Lord.



Pillars of a storehouse
at ancient Hazor

At the far end of forty years of purposeful wandering through lands of the Amalekites and the Amorites Joshua led his people past Jericho to take Hazor, the bastion of the upper reaches of the land of Canaan controlling the route from Babylon to Megiddo. Mute pillars from a storehouse and dwelling walls that once overheard the sounds of a family bear silent testimony.





Joshua then brought the victors back down to the valley between Ebal and Gerizim. There did they hear curses and blessings according as they would keep or break the law. And there did the tribes of the sons of Israel receive their inheritance, each to a portion of the land. And in the midst of them all was a narrow strip of land as yet unconquered and unassigned—Jerusalem, reserved for the purposes of God. But that had to await the joining of Boaz with a daughter of Moab and their time was not yet come. In the meantime, Joshua retired to his own portion, died, and was buried at Timnath-serah in the hill country of Ephraim.

The tribes of Israel walked in their own way once conquest was done and this was their weakness. Another weakness overtook them, by their own desires, and "they forsook the Lord and served Baal and Astaroth." These gods were a different breed from the God of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Moses. The values of Sinai went by the board.

Then there arose judges, each in his or her turn recalling the Israelites to Jehovah while leading them to victory over the marauders. The names conjure up memories of miraculous deeds—Deborah, with Barak and the rain-swelled Kishon overwhelming Sisera; Gideon, on the same fertile plains beneath Moreh and Tabor driving the Midianites beyond the Jordan; and Samson, foretold by an angel, with such strength as to perform incredible feats of valor only to find himself powerless by the wiles of Delilah.

We need reminders that in the midst of strife, men and women toil at simple tasks, make love, and tend the home. We need to remember that life must go on. Such a gentle reminder is the story of Naomi from Bethlehem, sojourning in Moab with her husband and two sons. One of the sons took Ruth to be his wife

**Bethlehem and the Field
of Boaz (Shepherds' Field)**



and then died, as did the father. Ruth's following after Naomi to Bethlehem with the promise "thy people shall be my people and thy God my God" has warmed the hearts of many, but none so much as the Bethlehemite, Boaz, who took her to wife. Their grandson was Jesse, and Jesse was the father of the shepherd who sang for the first king of Israel.

Samuel was the last of the judges in Israel and witnessed the disaster at Shiloh when the Philistines with their weapons of iron defeated Israel. That disaster followed the rout at Aphek where the Ark of the Law was captured.

It was a gloomy time brightened only by the eagerness of the Philistines to return the ark. Plagued by mice and ill fortune, they credited these to the ark, and sent it back to the closest Israelite town.

Clearly something had to be done and no tribe could do it alone, so they swallowed their pride and chose Saul as their king. Samuel, with misgivings about the powers kings arrogate to themselves, nevertheless put the seal of approval on the son of Kish, and it was said of this first king of Israel that "there was not among the children of Israel a goodlier person than he." Goodly he was, and lenient even with his enemies but he was moody too, and his moments of depression were times of danger, even for his friends.

The melancholy king found ministry to his troubled spirit in the songs of David, son of Jesse. The shepherd boy had spent lonely hours with his flock, plucking the lyre as they foraged, stilling their fretfulness with plaintive songs of the generations, as well as psalms of his own perception and confession. Playing for Saul was like playing for the lion rather than the flock, requiring the courage he had mustered in the aloneness of Bethlehem's bordering fields.

Then one day the Philistines taunted Saul in the Valley of Elah to send forth a champion for single combat with their colossus, Goliath of Gath, thus to initiate and perhaps decide the conflict. David happened into the camp armed with food for his older brothers and the sling with which he had protected his sheep. While others trembled, David took up the challenge. Declining armor and sharp instruments of battle, David took his familiar sling plus five smooth stones from the brook. To the Philistines it was comedy turned awry by one sure stone to the forehead of Goliath. They all fled, while David lived to enjoy and to rue renown.

In Saul, relief turned to envy as family and nation lent adoration to the young hero. Son Jonathan gave undying devotion to David, while daughter Michal took him to her heart. In a mad fit Saul flung his javelin at David, missing, only to plot assassination. David fled and gathered to himself four hundred malcontents, ever fleeing and ever plaguing Saul while refusing to do him bodily harm. In time none knew the land better than David, including every hiding place from Ashkelon to Ein Gedi.



The oasis at Ein Gedi on the west shore of the Dead Sea



Then Saul met the Philistines on the slopes of Mount Gilboa. In desperation he had turned to the soothsaying witch of En-dor and fancied he heard the voice of Samuel foretelling disaster. It was so. The sons of Saul including Jonathan were killed while Saul fell at his own hand to avoid capture. Their bodies were impaled on the walls of Beit Shean. At the news, David wept.

To the south, David held Judah in his hand. In time, Ishbaal, son of Saul and king of Israel in exile, was slain and David became the king and shepherd of all Israel.

Preserved for the Lord's own due time, apart from any of the tribes of Israel and thus free of jealousy among the brethren, Jerusalem of the Jebusites was David's choice for the seat of government. There he built the fortress called Zion and to it brought the Ark of the Covenant, placing it atop Mount Moriah where Abraham had offered Isaac.

David conquered and conquered. From the Euphrates to the Nile there was none to match his army. The Philistines fell before David at Beth-Horon and Lachish. He took Beit Shean and Megiddo, caused the Ammonites and Arameans to bend the knee, and then cleared the way to Elath and the Red Sea. In the wake of victory came wealth—vineyards, olives, and sycamores, sheep, camels, asses—and a welter of internal strife and corruption. The king himself was not blameless. Lusting after Bathsheba, he sent her husband, Uriah, on a suicidal mission and claimed her as his own. To that union was born Solomon who grew in favor with his father to the envy of his half brother Absalom. Seizing power, Absalom rashly waged battle with the troops of David in a tanglewood. It was his undoing. The wood took more of his men than the sword. Absalom, escaping on a mule, was caught by the branches of an oak and slain by Joab against the order of David. Once more the shepherd king was heard in plaintive song of lament.

Absalom's Pillar in the Kidron Valley at the foot of the Mount of Olives



"So the kingdom was established in the hand of Solomon." Not without cost. Domestic tranquillity was purchased by the blood of slain threats—Joab who had slain Absalom, Adonijah the half brother who wanted to be king, and Shimei of the family of Saul. Solomon consolidated and protected the kingdom by marriage ties with Egypt and a host of others. He ruled an empire and its caravan routes from Babylon to the land of the Pharaohs. Gold from Ophir, copper from the Aranah, and cedars of Lebanon were at his disposal.

Riches he turned to construction. Foremost of all was the Temple. Jerusalem, and specifically the Temple on Moriah, was to become the religious as well as political center of the nation. Every heart of Israel would henceforth respond to the magnetism of that hallowed spot even as a homing pigeon is drawn to its nest. All the generations, no matter their location or plight, would cry "Next year, Jerusalem" in perennial hope, and eternal loss was sure "If I forget thee, Jerusalem." Wise Solomon's wisdom was never more in evidence than in providing this centripetal force for the children of Israel.

Jerusalem from Olivet





The horses and chariots of Solomon were stabled at Hazor, Megiddo, and elsewhere. Fortifications with massive walls and complicated gateways spelled woe to marauders and safety to Israel. But—and it seems always to be true—the greatest dangers are the subtle ones within. Idolatry, almost inevitable with as many cults as wives in Solomon's court, incensed the faithful. Heavy taxation and forced labor supported the royal penchant for building. Unrest turned to disaffection among the ten tribes to the north and the ground was laid for crisis when the charisma of Solomon gave way at his death to the unwisdom of Rehoboam. His failure to lighten the burden was answered by secession and the united kingdom was no more. Now it was ten tribes called Israel against two, known as Judah.

Har (hill) Megiddo, or Armageddon,
where 20 successive cities have been
built and leveled by conquest

While Jehoshaphat ruled Judah, Ahab came to power in Israel; Ahab knew Jezebel, the royal daughter from Sidon, who insisted on the worship of Baal in the midst of Israel. She also loved luxury and tolerated corruption. The time had come for Elijah, the fearless prophet, who threatened Ahab with the wrath of God except he repent. Ahab preferred the head of Elijah to repentance. In order to speak again, Elijah fled, first to the wilderness of Gilead and then to Zarephath where he and two others found miraculous sustenance in a handful of meal and a small cruse of oil.

At the end of three years Elijah returned to challenge Jezebel's priests in the unforgettable contest on Mount Carmel. No frenzied urging of Baal by the priests would light their altar of sacrifice, yet fire from heaven answered the brashness of Elijah. Abashed and furious, Jezebel once more sought the life of Elijah who fled to a vale of the Mountain of Moses deep in the Sinai.

It must also be remembered regarding Elijah that his voice was raised against Ahab in the case of the gardener Naboth of Jezreel. Ahab coveted that garden and Jezebel framed its owner with charges of cursing both God and king. When the poor farmer had been stoned to death King Ahab by royal prerogative became owner, only to be condemned by the outraged conscience of Israel, Elijah, who dealt a strong blow for justice and accountability.



Isaiah, Jeremiah and Ezekiel — these epitomize one of the ultimate gifts of Israel to the world, the gift of prophecy. Their perception was so acute as to comprehend the thoughts of God; then they delivered them fearlessly and appropriately, sometimes with great drama and other times with the thunder of silent rebuke.

Isaiah discerned the idolatry, sensuality, and arrogance of a generation "of unclean lips." He renounced the empty formalities of the Temple and scathed the corruption that denied to Jerusalem and thus to the world that demonstration of wisdom and moral excellence which was to have been the glory of the Holy City.

Abraham had been drawn out of the confused uncommunity of Babylon to search for a city "which hath foundations whose builder and maker is God," that city which could invest Jerusalem with those intangible values the incarnation of which would be the prophecy of Shalom. So Isaiah envisioned the millennium of peace and righteousness centering on Moriah and resulting in broken yokes of bondage and the breaking of those who enslaved their fellowmen, be they Babylonian, Egyptian, or others. It was the age-old dream of Zion, the golden strand of heritage and hope which calls successive generations of Israel to account and to mission.

Then for Israel and Judah came exile—first at the hands of Tiglath-pileser III who so scattered Israel that it has been known forever—or at least until now—as the Lost Tribes of the House of Israel. Judah was spared by refusing to battle the Assyrian host, and might have continued in safety except for the later revolt against Babylon led by Zedekiah, who spurned the advice of Jeremiah. Nebuchadnezzar was his undoing, breaching the wall of Jerusalem and pillaging the Temple. Then, in the custom of the centuries in the beleaguered land of Palestine, Nebuchadnezzar utterly destroyed the city, taking captive into Babylon those not already slain in battle or executed.

Israel and Judah were no more, except in tattered remnants and in that subtle hope of redemption which keeps a people still a people in spite of circumstances. Others, even Israel, had been torn from home and kindred only to lose their identity, but among the Jews the concept of Exile was born. Some day they would return to their homeland and to the prophetic mission for which they were chosen.

Censure and hope, counsel and consolation the prophets spoke, and still do, lending insights of the timeless to temporality.

To Zedekiah, the demands of expediency and the pressures of the warlike seemed preferable to the counsel of Jeremiah. It was a mistake. He found himself captive and blinded by the

enemy he could have avoided, while his people were herded into Babylonian captivity. The startling prescience of Jeremiah should have been heeded but there are times when insight runs poor second to clamor.

Ezekiel was among the first of Judah to be deported to Babylon, being exiled in the year Zedekiah came to the throne, 597 B.C. Like his fellow prophet in Jerusalem, Ezekiel's message was at first in denunciation of the sins of that errant city. At the fall of Jerusalem his prophetic ministry turned to the inspiration of that hope which would keep a people intact and planning for a return home.

Ezekiel employed visuals and symbolic acts to convey his perceptions. The chariot of God, with its wheels within wheels, is followed by the shipwreck of the vessel of Tyre and the testimony of revival as dry bones come together "bone to bone. . . and the sinews and flesh came upon them. . . and the breath came into them and they lived and stood up upon their feet." The hope of restoration, of rising into newness of life, lent courage to a captive people then, and it still does.

To spur the captives on and to enhance their identity in a foreign clime, Ezekiel, like Isaiah, reminded them of a land to be resettled by holy people, and of a Temple that would once again rise in the midst of Jerusalem.

With the conquering of Babylon by Cyrus the Persian, what was to be began to be, and the people returned to Zion. By decree, Cyrus ordered the rebuilding of the Temple and the restoration of the Temple vessels. Under the challenge of Haggai and Zechariah the people exerted themselves to return and to rebuild, but the influence of the diaspora and the hardships of return took their toll. The law which had been elaborated in exile to maintain the uniqueness of Judah intact diminished in importance.

Then Ezra, a scribe, versed in the Law and intent on its observance, went by royal consent from Persia to Jerusalem to instruct the people in the Law and to enforce it equally with the law of the state. The people, trembling from the cold rain as well as from remorse for their sins, renewed their covenant. With Nehemiah to work alongside them, they built the wall "because the people had a mind to work." Neither he nor they would hearken to the solicitous voice of Sanballat or others who sought "to do them mischief." The words of Nehemiah have bolstered the courage of Jews ever since; "Should such a man as I flee?" His staunch regimen, however, did cause enmity and eventual separation between the Jews and the Samaritans. When Nehemiah stringently enforced the law by driving out of their midst one wrongdoer, that malcontent went over to Samaria and helped to establish rival worship on Mount Gerizim. It continues still.

Legends of courage stem from the captivity in Babylon, such as the story of Daniel, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. But the one that prompts joyous recollection in Israel today is the story of Esther. It was probably Xerxes, the son of Darius, who was pleased by the sensuality and the pomp and circumstance of the court. Partying was common and protracted. On the seventh day of one such feast the king ordered Queen Vashti to appear before the assembled princes. It was an impropriety and she refused, only to be banished. Esther, a Jewess but not recognized as such and a niece of the Benjaminite Mordecai, was the king's choice to succeed Vashti.

Then came Haman, one of the Amalekites, and a long-term enemy of the Jews, who prevailed upon the king to order the extermination of the Jews and to seize their property. Mordecai appealed to Esther who in turn risked her life by going to the king on her own initiative rather than at this request. Had the scepter fallen to show his displeasure she and all her people would have been killed, but the scepter did not fall and Esther turned the tables on Haman, artfully showing his villainy. Sadness turned to rejoicing. Once more the children of Israel had been delivered. In memory Purim is celebrated annually.

Through generations of struggle and pathos, whether suffered at the hand of foes or self-inflicted, this nation of all the nations of earth—even when amorphous and to all appearances done—is brought to account by the Divine One who first called them, a nation in embryo, out of Babylon. A nation, like a person, needs a sense of destiny to lend purpose and worth to life which is too easily set askew. For his own ends I AM called Israel to such destiny and the choice has meaning only in that nation's right conduct and realization of God's will. No inherent supremacy is there, although their metal has been tempered in many a crucible and sharpened against a legion of grindstones. It is in keeping the covenant that excellence is revealed and the stewardship of influence disclosed. Known by one name in token of oneness though severed and dispersed, Israel is yet to be the servant of the Lord who, by suffering endured, is to redeem the nations of the world. Thus saith the prophets: "The Lord will call his people Zion when they are of one heart and mind and dwell in righteousness." To this intent were the Law and the Prophets given. From Moses to Elijah to Zechariah and Malachi the hope of the Kingdom of God is uppermost, with the house of Judah and the house of Joseph to be united as of old, the days of exile ended, and the Messianic age begun.



At the Wailing Wall



The time was not yet. A subdued people, quiescent except when stirred to indignation by some rash ruler's attempt to establish a pagan cult, toughed out the years of foreign occupation. Judas Maccabeus, the Hammer, forged a militant uprising against the Hellenizing Seleucids. Once won, the victory gave way to abuse of power—it seems always thus—and Pharisees arose only to be crushed in turn. Perhaps it was from their embers that a gentler sect arose. They built a commune at Qumran on a tableland above the northwest shore of the Dead Sea and prepared what now is known as the Dead Sea Scrolls.

Their tragedy bespeaks the passion of the children of Israel to tell the story from generation to generation. Their ardor for the word, and impending annihilation at the hands of Roman conquerors, prompted their hiding the results of scribal work—the meticulous copying of the books of the Book—in earthen vessels in arid caves overlooking the Dead Sea. There they remained until a twentieth century Bedouin goatherd tested his skill by throwing a rock into what was left of the crumbled opening of one of the caves. He enlarged the opening and found in earthen jars half disintegrated scrolls of parchment or papyrus. The diligent search which followed uncovered all but one of the scrolls of the Old Testament and a host of other writings.

The Essenes of Qumran spanned an era from about 150 B.C. to A.D. 70 and that is the time of Rome, and a Man from Galilee.



Rome marched across the world, subduing it. One of the Romans was Pompeii who marched into the Holy of Holies in Jerusalem. Unlike Nebuchadnezzar, he did not destroy or loot the Temple treasure. A new kind of law and order was at hand, still harsh but struggling to be more just. In the wake of Rome came Herod, son of the Idumaeen Antipater.

Some say Herod was Gentile rather than Jew but the testimony out of the dust of Masada and the glorious Temple in Jerusalem bears strong evidence that the conversion of the Idumaeans had its effect on Herod. One thing is sure, he was an avid builder. Antonium, Herodium, Masada, Caesarea, and strengthened fortresses across the land witness to his driving passion to build. They also testify of the love of luxury, and of fear that drove Herod to rashness and cruelty. That cruelty was felt by his own kind as well as those who labored under the lash. Mariamne and others of his household were executed at his order. But genius he was and the Temple was his crowning achievement.

Then, in the days of Caesar Augustus there went forth a decree that all the world should be taxed. Just when that was is difficult to say, but a man named Matthew, telling the story years later, tied it to the last years of Herod and related to his cruelty. At any rate, to the city of his forebears went one Joseph of Nazareth with his heart's love, Mary, she being heavy with child. Up to Jerusalem and five miles beyond they went—to Bethlehem Ephratah, foretold by the prophet Micah.

There, sheltered by a cave, midst the fellowship of kine and sheep, a child was born and they named him Jesus.





"And he went down with them and came to Nazareth, and was obedient to them; . . . and increased in wisdom and in stature, and in favor with God and man."

Out of the obscure and trifling, significance may come forth. From a swamp, the lily, and from an acorn, the oak. Out of nothingness, plenty—and so it was that the insignificant village of Nazareth, once seen, as soon forgotten, a mere cipher of a town, nurtured the seed of heaven in his formative years. Because he grew there, unrecognized except as child of Joseph and Mary, that little town has lighted the eyes of children for two thousand years, and challenged men and nations to a brighter tomorrow of hope. And it all began in a simple home with a Bethlehem-born child playing, laughing, learning, and sheltering in his mother's arms at some hurt of his own, or a deeper hurt observed in others.



Nazareth knows the heat of summer and the nip of winter's air. The arid clime hardly pampers tree and grass but there is water, and in the spring the anemone and cyclamen grow in abundance. Below the town, beyond and beneath a rocky promontory, the Jezreel Valley spreads on the left past Mount Tabor to join another valley, the Jordan, and on the right widens past Moreh to the blue waters of the Mediterranean. Camel caravans from Babylon and Egypt seemed from a distance to be crawling across the valley floor. Over the hills to the east, past Cana and the Horns of Hittin, lay that perfect blue gem, the Sea of Galilee, bordered by the fruitful plain of Gennesaret and the hills of Gilead, and peopled by the fishermen of Tabgha and Capernaum as well as vacationing Romans who lolled in the mineral baths of Tiberias.

The red anemone which grows in profusion in Israel



On the edge of the world he lived, eyeing it, loving it, and witness to beauty, thrill, and heartache. It was a time of prophetic gestation and burgeoning awareness.



Then came a time when the spark must burst into flame. The soft face and untested sinew of the child must give way to the yearning courage of the man, and so he went forth. Steeped in heritage, he knew who he was, a child of Abraham and of God. Aware of need, and equipped with the age-old dream of Zion, he knew his mission and destiny. He dared to speak of this to his townsmen assembled in the synagogue. So angered were they by his presumption that they led him to a rocky point with intent to cast him to his death below; "but passing through the midst of them, he went away" to Magdala, Capernaum, and Chorazim.



The covenant of his forefathers was important to this Man of Galilee. He renewed it in the waters of the Jordan. By the hands of John he was buried in token of the wholeness of his commitment. Why the rough-hewn Baptist? Because the incrustations of ritual and compromise had dwindled the authority of official ranks. In John, however, there was the genuine authority of the righteous.

The cool, laving river spoke its own message of life and beauty even as it flowed into the captivity of the hungry mouth of the Dead Sea, where it would escape to the clouds, purified of the dross, to fall again as reviving rain.

He was one man, and in a sense the only true man who ever lived. Yet he was every man, hungering, thirsting, and sensing the breathless ache of temptation with us all. But temptation was left without satisfaction in his case. From the arid height above Jericho to the pinnacle of the Temple Mount in Jerusalem the man proved himself stronger than the wiles which pander and control so many others.

Mount of Temptation from Jericho



Pinnacle of the Temple Mount

From the crucible of temptation, and from forty days and nights of communion with the One he knew as Father, Jesus went back into the Galilee. There, along the track of Abraham's journey of faith, into the heartland of the world where men would discover Armageddon or Zion, there he was to teach the song behind the songs of David. There he was to be the Word before the words.



The wilderness of Judea

He walked by the shores of Galilee and plucked fishermen from their craft, adding to them tax gatherers and other common folk as if to say, "It is by sinners recalled from sin, and by those unencumbered by station, rank, or fetid desire that God's kingdom shall come unfold. By these shall rude Israel and, pray God, the world, be transmuted into that splendor foreseen by the patriarchs and prophets."



Fishing on the Sea of Galilee

They were astonished at his teaching and perplexed by the power with which he transformed the commonplace, making men of midgets, lifting the worthless into worth, and healing both breach and body by love and faith. To those who followed him he was health and joy, to the multitude he was both curiosity and hope, but to some he was the unknown, thus to be feared and by some stealth to destroy.



A catch of St. Peter's
fish at Ginosar



Seated on a hill overlooking that lake called Kinneret (the Harp) as well as Galilee, his hand moved from rocky ground to flower to thistle as he taught in unforgettable parables.

When disciples drawn from their labors grew wearied and fretful about the morrow, he would say, knowing they would be sheltered and fed, "Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin. And yet I say unto you that even Solomon, in all his glory, was not arrayed like one of these. Therefore, if God so clothe the grass of the field, which today is, and tomorrow is cast into the oven, how much more will he not provide for you...? Therefore take no thought, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed?... Seek ye first to build up the kingdom of God, and to establish his righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you."

When he would warn them of the cunning of those who came claiming more than they could deliver, or were in fact false in their pretensions, he bade the disciples look to the fruitage of their lives: "Do men gather figs of thistles? Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit."

Careless sowing, thoughtless building, or values esteemed too lightly called forth some visual reminder which would forever after signal insights which would mean more with every retelling.



Sharing with them the splendor of that magnificent lake bounded by blue hills and green valleys he reminded them of their calling to be the fellowship of the faithful, the tangibility of the heavenly kingdom in the midst of men. The golden strand of purpose had surfaced once again. They saw it in him, and to their surprise he saw it in them and led them to believe that it could be found and nourished in others.

"Blessed are the poor in spirit, who come unto me; for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

"And again blessed are they that mourn; for they shall be comforted.

"And blessed are the meek; for they shall inherit the earth.

"And blessed are all they that do hunger and thirst after righteousness; for they shall be filled with the Holy Ghost.

"And blessed are the merciful; for they shall obtain mercy.

"And blessed are all the pure in heart; for they shall see God.

"And blessed are all the peacemakers; for they shall be called the children of God."



It was a new way of saying the Ten Commandments, reducing them to two—love God and love your fellows—and then spelling them out in terms of *yes* instead of *no* and *do* instead of *don't*. And all the time they saw through him to the Father. He was God's transparency. They also saw themselves as they might become. He was summation and fulfillment, and simultaneously a foretaste of the future. By some mystery beyond their ken, and ours, he was the interpenetration of mortality and immortality and the overcoming of our duality and our duplicity. He was integrity. And out of Israel one more great gift had come.

One day along the upper banks of the Jordan, he paused with them in a scene of surpassing beauty. Their solitude was broken only by the sounds of waterfall and rushing brook. The setting suggested that harmony possible when men, like nature, live in ways congenial to the purpose of their creation. The question he asked was quietly spoken but exploded in the mind of Peter, "Who am I?" Anyone could have answered with a name, or could have said a hundred things about him, but Peter, in the wonder of perception, replied, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God."



A few days later, on Mount Tabor from which vantage point it seems possible to see all the world and heaven too, Peter heard a voice from heaven say in confirmation, "This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased, listen to him."

It was a wonder—too much to be believed except by the eyes of faith, and thus was counted blasphemy. From thenceforth, the end was certain.

From the serene azure waters, from the green field and woods in his beloved Galilee, Jesus turned his face steadfastly to go through valleys and wilderness to Jerusalem where all of the history and hopes of Israel converge. How could they know in Jerusalem that it was in him that heritage and destiny were met?



In a garden called Gethsemane, at the foot of Olivet, they took him. In the Antonium they subjected him to all manner of abuse and perjured testimony and led him forth to Golgotha, crowned with thorns and stumbling under the weight of a cross upon which they would nail him, a thing to flout and laugh to scorn.



No wonder he had paused on the Mount of Olives to weep, not for himself but for the city—its leaders, its preoccupied people, the poor, the children who before long would fall beneath the heavy hand of Rome, to be scattered for two thousand years and to know intense persecution in every generation and in every place. He must have wept too at the ill-begotten zeal and cruelty of those who would claim to be his own. The dream of Abraham would suffer, and the world with it, because some of the children of Israel would not recognize their deliverance, and others, sensing salvation, would distort it even into the horrors of a holocaust. Well did he weep, that Hope of Israel and Light of the World.

When it was finished, loving hands braved scorn and retribution to take down the body and lay it, "bound in linen cloths with spices," upon a stone slab. A great stone was rolled in front of the tomb. Some smiled in self-congratulation. Others wept.

What happened then was difficult of belief, then and now, because those who knew him and loved him said that Jesus not only disappeared from the tomb but came to them, walking alongside two on the road to Emmaus, preparing a fire and breakfast for others on the shore of the Sea of Galilee, and commanding them to "feed my sheep." He spoke of those who would follow him in struggle and righteous life. When they thought of all the arguments they might employ to prove him to a skeptical world, he said quite simply, "By this shall all men know that you are my disciples, because you love one another."

And so the message goes, not only to the confessed followers of Christ but to all those born of Abraham. Those who truly represent the heritage and the promise, and authenticate it before others, shall do so by "love one for another."

Until then, the message is flawed, and the calling denied.



The years between then and now have borne more potent testimony of denial than of covenant. Still there have been the valiant in testimony, from Rabbi Meir to Maimonides and Ben Gurion among the Jews, and from Paul to sundry Christians of today, each in his own way true to the light as he perceived it. Others there have been, but no sooner had they borne testimony than they were slain and superseded by zealots of the cross, menorah, or crescent who, with apparent good intent, have strewn the centuries with the blood of their brethren. As wrong as the children of Israel, fumbling with words and a golden calf before the rebuke of Moses, and as guilty as Judas with thirty pieces of silver, competing hordes have justified their cruelty as defenders of the faith which sprang for them all from Abraham.

We could do with the quiet beckoning of a burning bush and the gentle persuasion of a manger-born child.

Voices from the dust, no longer self-justifying but yearning for an end to the follies of ill will and genocide, plead from the yesterdays in behalf of tomorrow's children. Yes, what of the children, the youngsters of three cultures, growing up in the eye of a storm? It is said that children everywhere are very much alike, and that is probably true. They tease and climb and laugh and slide down any inviting incline. They burst from school yards with shouts and flailing arms. They cry and sometimes whine. They are an astonishing mix of charm and chaos, and when they are very young there is no way to tell whose side they are on.

One of the
Youngest of the
Children of Israel

The smile of a child from one culture is quite as enchanting as that of another, and their tears are drawn from the same well. Perhaps someday we shall find a way to create a climate in which the dreams of an Arab boy can be realized without doing violence to the aspirations of a Jewish child, and vice versa.





In the meantime, these are the children of Israel—winsome, mischievous, dreaming, and harried by the winds of turmoil that whirl around them.

Some grow in the crowded streets of the old city of Jerusalem while others know the smaller cities and towns like Bethlehem.

Yet other children are at home in the desert and know the sound of place names like Wadi Firan or Abu Rodeis.

Home may be a tent or an apartment house.



Whether Jewish, Moslem, or Christian they are all the offspring of Abraham, and if you look in their eyes it is very hard to tell them apart.

A Jewish boy is heir to a tradition of faith that is patient, durable, and characterized by zest and joy which uplifted the heart in the forlorn ghettos of eastern Europe.

From among his own people he will find some young lass whose face reminds of legends, and whose name is apt to be Rachel or Deborah.

His Arab neighbors will be nearby, and though they stem from the same source the stories they learn will carry a different message.

By and large their lot is more pathetic. Poverty has become a way of life; still there is hope and imagination.

**Child of Sinai at the Valley of Rest
near the Mountain of Moses**



And then there are children who are infrequently seen, the Bedouin children of the Sinai. Their life is a harsh round of heat and wind. But they may know something that privileged children rarely discover.

Bedouin child at Et Tur





Hope of tomorrow—
the infectious smile
of today's children

These are the children of Israel, soon to be the parents of another generation of the "seed of Abraham." It stretches credulity to see these faces distorted by hatred and their hopes dashed by conflict. Dare we hope that at long last they may experience "shalom"?





IN CONCLUSION

Without memory we are nothing more than programmed flesh and blood, unable to recall past action, unable to retrieve information from the latest moment let alone deepest heritage, or even to relate yesterday's experience to today's opportunity. With memory we perceive our identity, discern the path which leads to now, and shape tomorrow's destination.

Memory is quickened by various means. Scriptures are the agent of remembrance, provoking recollection of those moments when human striving has been purged and redirected by a voice from heaven and a relationship has been established between Creator and created, between Intelligence and intelligence. Qumran will forever symbolize Jewish insight into Scripture's value and the determination to preserve the Book for posterity.

Historic sites and artifacts lend palpable evidence of yesterday, quickening the sense of history. Voices speak from the dust to plead for attention to hard-won values and avoidance of bitter-ended folly. It is not enough to live in the past nor to project it unconditionally into the future. We would not want our mistakes hallowed and perpetuated no matter how attached we are to them at the moment. It is the conservation of values discovered by forebears and tested by the generations which warrants attention, and also the fulfillment of the best dreams they laid down for lack of time, or lack of vision. So the tels and tombs speak of the heartbeats and heartaches of long ago, leaving it to us to establish and refine the values and dreams of yesterday. We walk in the old paths, remembering that they go backward and forward at the same time, "an old, old path made ever new."

Celebration, too, quickens consciousness of roots, stirs pride of being a people, and reminds of meaning felt worthy of sacrifice. Among the Jews, perhaps more than among any other people, celebration has stimulated the continuity of heritage and identity. Whether in the poverty and restrictions of the ghetto or in conditions of affluence, the Jewish family is united with every other Jewish family in the world during Pesach (Passover). Deliverance from bondage in Egypt and the values of freedom under God are honored, the story recounted, and to it is added the cry of the generations in exile, "Next year in Jerusalem!" The poignant celebration of Pesach is supplemented by Purim, the

joyous reminder of the courage of Esther at another moment of deliverance. The words of Mordecai to Esther come ringing down the centuries to remind exuberant celebrants that they, too, have been "called to the kingdom for such a time as this." There are other celebrations, too, stirring recollection not only of who they are but whose they are.

In moments of forgetting, the prophets have spoken "Thus saith the Lord," only to be thanked by pelting with stones or by sharp nails driven into a cross; but their aim has been sure and Israel has been recalled. Here, indeed, is one of the great and unique contributions of Jewish heritage to the world: awareness that the veil between mortality and immortality may be interpenetrated, bringing that Voice from heaven to bear upon the affairs and foibles of men, judging, correcting, and inspiring. It is the concept of prophet, seer, and revelator, not only expressed in a person but in a prophetic people who are to work toward the ultimate uplift and harmony of humankind, themselves the foreshadowing of what God desires for all men.

Who can count the contributions of this people? We have touched all too briefly on some—the cultivation of corporate and individual memory in preserving continuity of heritage, the role of the prophetic and revelatory, and the concept of liberation under Providence. We have hinted at others in the unfolding story of Israel. They need to be specified.

In Abraham, the friend of God, faith has been exemplified, prompting voluntary exile into the Land of Promise which in fact was the eye of the storm, the center place of God's redemptive endeavors through men for man. It was more than a dream dimly perceived of "a city with foundations whose builder and maker is God." It was motivation strong enough to launch forth from relative certainty into uncertainty. Many through the years have pioneered, and quite often for reasons of escape or the thrill of venturing forth; but in Abraham there was sense of mission, of being sent, for purposes unclear but strong and real. That sense of mission was to be corrupted from time to time; it would be distorted, and would suffer from being reduced, but it was to endure.

Also, in Abraham, with his son Isaac on Mount Moriah, came perceptions of the value of the person and the inappropriateness of human sacrifice. Human life and dignity are not expendable except by volition, and then creatively. It is a lesson yet to be learned.

In Moses came the thrust against totalitarianism and slavery, and also sensitivity to the processes involved in development of a throng into a people and a nation. To the patient perseverance of those years along the Wadi floors of Sinai must be added the Sinai revelation. We cannot escape the impact, not only upon Israel but upon the consciousness of the world of the Ten Commandments. Written through them all is insistence upon

accountability to God and men, the theological and moral ground of responsible life and institutions. The law, tormented by interpretations but attached to doorposts and instilled in the mind, has bound the generations to a distinctive heritage and a disciplined dream.

The Temple bespeaks the necessity of a central focus which beckons to every point on the perimeter: "Come home, at least in your heart." It is a tangible reminder of history and hope, even when crumbled into the last few stones upon stones. The echo of its destruction is heard in every shattered festive glass and in the weaving and wailing of generations leaning into the Western Wall, and clustering to its northern end to be near to where the Temple was and is to be. Beacon of the dispersed and magnet of the gathering, the Temple has made the difference between the Jews and the lost tribes of the house of Israel whose identity has long since been assimilated into a thousand cultures. A people of heritage and destiny, a people with a homing instinct they are, in spite of scattering. That is the meaning of exile.

From time to time throughout the story we have found intimations of divine purpose, that which makes the People of the Book a people with a mission. Abraham and all his children since, whether by blood or adoption, are joined by the necessity to fulfill that commission by which "the nations of the earth are to be blessed." Values already enumerated have had their effect, and put together make a mighty imprint upon the world.

This is certainly a partial fulfillment of purpose and mission. But the world remains unblessed in large part if "blessed" has to do with realizing those qualities spelled out by Jesus in the Beatitudes—meekness, hungering after righteousness, mercy, purity of heart, and peace-making.

There is a word, almost exclusive to the children of Israel, which speaks of the heritage and the promise and fuses the values already mentioned—Zion. As we shall use the term here it is more than current Zionism, as important as that may be. Zionism has had much to do with the rescue and return of a people. It has helped to restore a nation and has overtones of age-old intent. Therefore, no easy dismissal or denigration of Zionism is here contemplated. But contemporary Zionism is not sufficient to fulfill the dimensions and commission of the people of the Covenant.

Zion, in its larger sense, is the golden strand of purpose tying the generations together, and it is the unfinished heritage of Israel. Whether we sing of "Enoch's city seen of old" or ponder the covenant of Noah, Zion is the common denominator. It surfaces in the words of the prophets, not only as a place to which "the ransomed of the Lord shall return" (Isaiah 51:11)* but as a condition of life: "Out of Zion, the perfection of beauty, God

* Scriptural references from Revised Standard Version, Thomas Nelson & Sons.

shines forth" (Psalm 50:2). It is a condition to be realized in justice and righteousness (Isaiah 1:27).

The persistent prophetic counsel surfaces again in the New Testament where emphasis on the kingdom of God is a reaffirmation of the Zion vision. Counsel to the children of the covenant is very specific: "Mend your ways, heed my appeal, agree with one another, live in peace, and the God of love and peace will be with you" (II Corinthians 13:11). Here Zion is more than a promise; it is a process of transforming the commonplace in order that the nations of the earth shall be blessed.

What is Zion? It is the kingdom of God made tangible. At this point all three religions stemming from Abraham share a mutual task, too frequently obscured, to discern and express the wish of God for humanity and for humanity's home.

The essence of Zion is that realization, hard won by Joseph, son of Jacob, that neither dream nor substance in and of itself is the totality of life. Only when he was mature enough to blend the visionary with the pragmatic was he able to carry the affairs of state and provide for the welfare of his family. That flesh and spirit are one is one of the finest realizations out of Israel. Fullness of joy results from their gracious blending, while their separation spells disaster. Integrity—singleness or wholeness—is akin to that holiness of which the generations of the prophets have spoken. Jesus Christ, far from betraying Israel as Israel has

100 often supposed, was fruitage and fulfillment as the Word made flesh. Preaching the gospel of the kingdom was the renewal of the challenge to Judah to implement the mission of the patriarchs. His very relationship with the Father, which was counted blasphemy, was a parable of experience with the Divine which has always marked the children of Abraham in their finest hour.

"May thy memory be blessed forever. Great is thy hope, O Zion." These words were found on crumbling parchment at Qumran and are as appropriate now as they were then. The heritage and the hope are always under threat, if not by the external force of Rome or some other then by subtle, internal seductions and preoccupations. Zion remains before the children of Israel, an unfinished heritage. Perhaps it can never be finished, and that may be part of its value. We need a moving target, always possible of partial achievement but never done, leaving to each generation the opportunity to push toward its deeper fulfillment.

Zion is realized in each moment that the commonplace is transformed into a closer approximation of the divine purpose. It shines brighter with every evidence of courageous righteousness. Whenever Nehemiah-like perseverance is displayed, God's kingdom is victorious; and when the determined sacrifice of Masada is matched by the triumph of the human spirit, as in the men from Galilee, then Zion is not only a promise, it is here.

PORTFOLIO

A small collection of additional photographs. They speak of yesterday and today—of heritage and hope.



Roman theater at Baal Shamon

Synagogue from second or perhaps fourth century (CE) at Capernaum



Crusader ruins and Mosque of El Jazzar at AKKO (Acre)



Jaffa Gate and David's Tower, Old Jerusalem



Shrine of the Book, repository of the
Dead Sea Scrolls, Jerusalem



Star of David and sacred books at the Western (Wailing) Wall



Jewish men at the Western Wall, defense
perimeter of the Herodian Temple






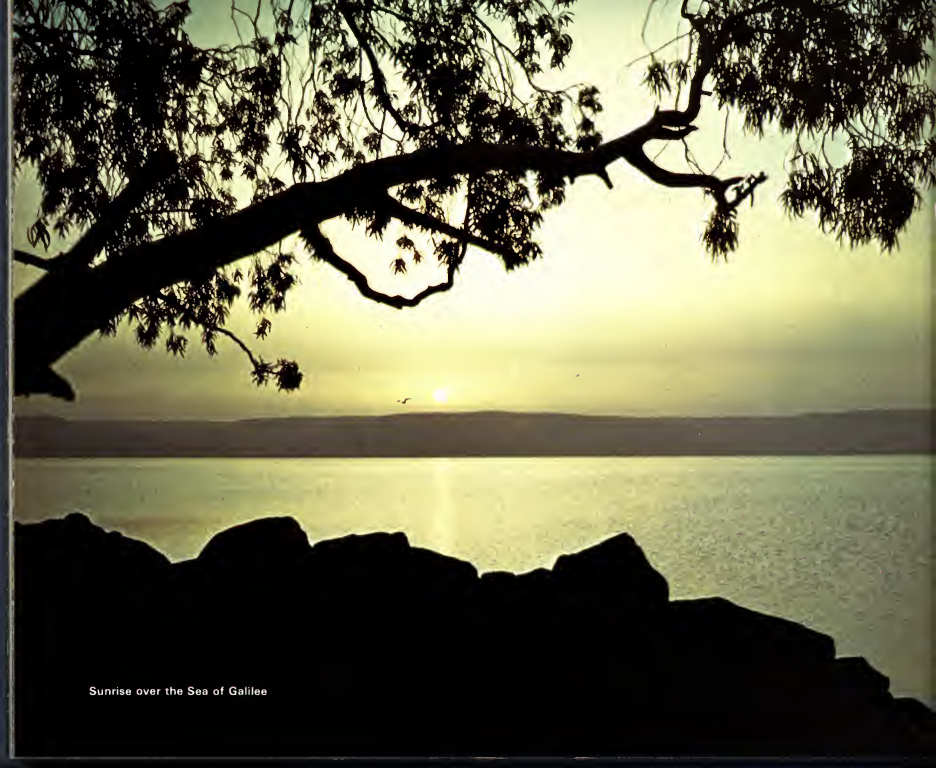
Dome of the Rock, constructed on the Temple site, made in A.D. 691 (C.E. 705).

Harvesting by hand in the Valley of Dothan



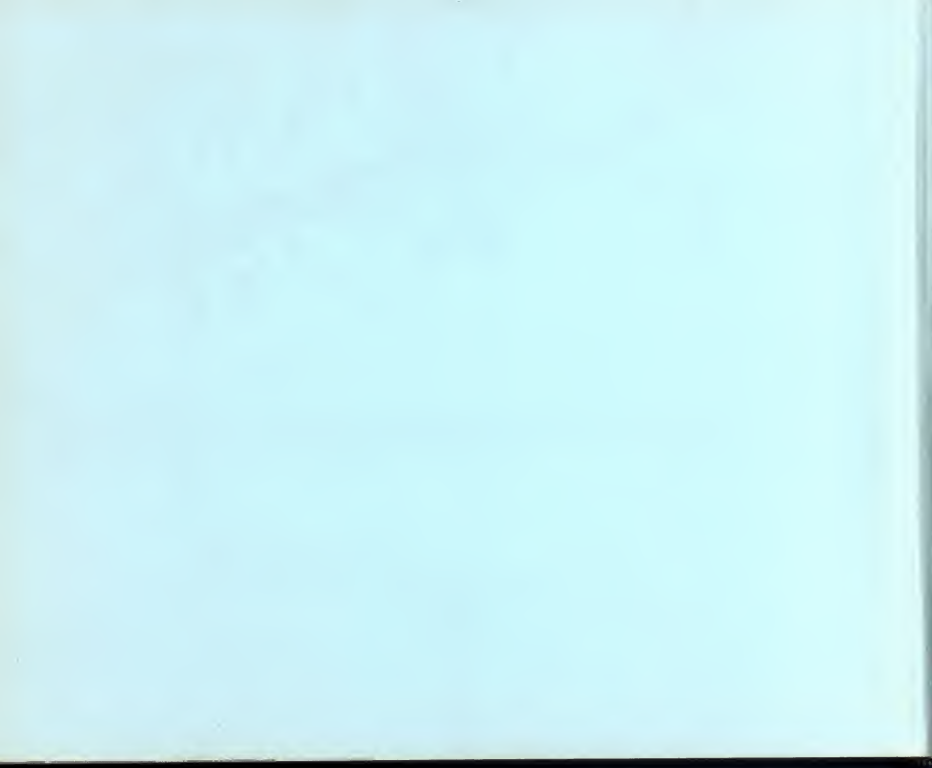
A photograph of a tree in a snowy landscape. The tree is in the foreground, with its trunk and branches visible. The ground is covered in a layer of snow, and there are some bare branches in the foreground. The background shows a snowy field and a distant horizon.

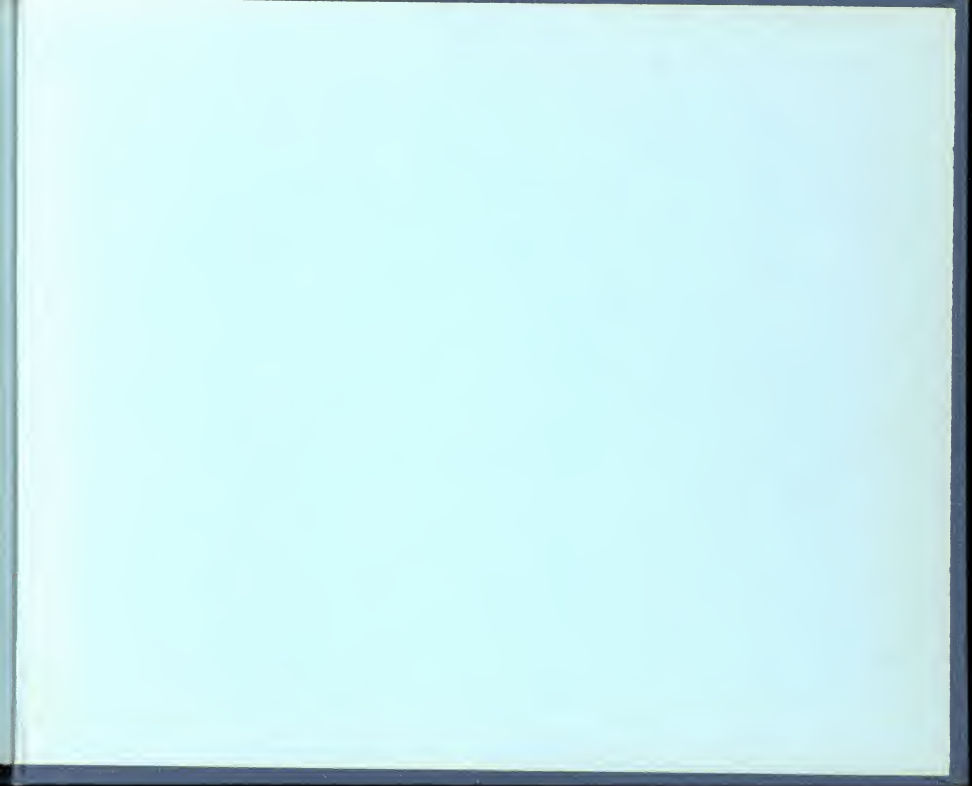
Winter in the Upper Gallies



Sunrise over the Sea of Galilee









ABOUT THE AUTHOR



The author was born in Mansfield, Washington, U.S.A. and came to manhood in Coeur d'Alene, Idaho. Since 1940 he has served in several countries as a minister of the Gospel. Through the years he has been a feature writer, editor, author, and freelance photographer. Many journeys to the Holy Land have instilled a sense of being at home there. In 1975, he participated in an intercultural seminar in Muslim, Christian, and Jewish relations as its official chronicler. Association with people across a broad religious spectrum brought acute awareness that "all are called according to the gifts of God unto them." He has written *Israel—Land of Zion* hoping that the life of all peoples may be enhanced rather than scourged by their diversity.



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